

used to say: "One of the wisest things ever said was, 'Wait a minute.'" That, in a phrase, is the essential role played by congressional committees.

IMPORTANCE OF POLITICIANS

Democracy, after all, is a process, not a product, and what our democracy really needs is more politicians. That was one line I used to say that was sure to get a reaction. Very few of my constituents agreed.

Showing skill as a politician has come to mean demonstrating the ability to raise campaign funds, engaging in the tit-for-tat of negative advertising, jockeying for public support based on polls and focus groups, or skewering an opponent with a one-liner during a televised debate. People have come to view the word politician—particularly with regard to the Congress—with disdain. Plenty of voters feel that politicians sell-out their beliefs and promises. "Stick to your guns," they urge.

Controversy and conflict are unavoidable in a nation as large and diverse as ours—a diversity that is rightly represented in the peoples' House. To avoid ripping apart at the seams, our country needs people who know how to accommodate different points of view and work for common solutions—it needs politicians.

You are an essential part of this effort. By working behind the scenes, knowing what Members want, proposing compromises, addressing all the difficult details of legislation, and dealing with all the worthy groups wanting contradictory things, you—as well as your bosses—have to be politicians in order to keep our democracy running.

BEING A GOOD POLITICIAN

For the most part, people don't pay attention to how their hopes, dreams and ambitions are turned into public policy through the lawmaking process. Most citizens and journalists take that very political process for granted. They shouldn't.

Constituents often asked my position on a substantive issue. I don't think anyone inquired about my political skills—and, in this world, political skills are essential to get things done. The key to being an effective legislator or staffer is respecting that system and figuring out how to make it work. So what political skills do you need—what skills does a member need?

First, you know how to consult, particularly with your colleagues—talking to them, listening to them, making sure they feel they are in the loop. Support for ideas is largely built one-on-one, but also in larger forums. Key individuals—inside and outside of the Congress—have their own ideas and valid concerns, and they expect to be able to share them. Lyndon Johnson had his own way of putting this with a sign he had in his Senate office: "You ain't learning nothing when you're talking."

Second, you calm—rather than inflame—discussions of controversial issues. Things can get pretty heated in the Congress, and disagreement is inevitable in a House as large and diverse as ours. It is relatively easy to make a bad situation worse. One thing that I'm certain of is that you cannot produce good legislation in a bad atmosphere. You can produce heat in such an environment, but not light.

Third, you know how to persuade. It takes an enormous amount of persuasion to build a majority in support of an idea. You all know how much persuasion is involved in getting approval of even a modest piece of legislation. You have to line up support and be in touch with sometimes hundreds of individuals from both parties, in the Congress and outside the Congress.

Fourth, you must be willing to share credit. I remember former Speaker Tip O'Neill

putting his arm around me and giving me some advice as we walked down the hall. "Neil," he said—he called me Neil for my first decade in Congress because I reminded him of a Boston baseball player named Neil Hamilton. "Neil, you can accomplish anything in this town if you're willing to let someone else take the credit."

Finally, you know how to compromise. Compromise is essential to producing law in our system. Good politicians, both legislators and staff, are able to find points of agreement that will allow a consensus to emerge. They will look for solutions that allow both sides to claim, if not victory, at least some gains.

Your skills are crucial in finding acceptable solutions. Compromise might involve altering some key words; phrasing in a change; inserting a new provision; requiring a study; splitting differences in funding; delaying or postponing implementation of a section. You have to seek these accommodations among rival interests because you know that it is necessary to make the Congress—and country—work.

From my perspective, the ability to build consensus is probably the most important single skill needed in the Congress—by Members and staff. Any fool can blow a meeting or discussion apart—it takes real political skill to bring people together. That is why we need more politicians of your skill these days, not fewer.

WHY IS IT WORTHWHILE?

Well, is this demanding, tedious process of passing legislation worthwhile? You and I know well the frustrations:

As a member, I always felt it was hard to keep on the right side of the voter. When I was in my district, I heard complaints that I wasn't spending enough time in Washington; when I was in Washington, people said I was ignoring the home folks and only paid attention to them during elections. When I drove an old car in my district, people said it looked like something a farmer would use for hauling trash; when I got a new car, they said the lobbyists had gotten to me. When I wore an old suit, people said I had no class; when I wore a new one, I was accused of going high-hat. When I missed church, people said I was an atheist; when I attended church, I was a pious fraud, trolling for votes in church. When Congress passed a lot of laws, we were a meddlesome Congress; when we weren't passing laws, we were an incompetent, do-nothing Congress ignoring the needs of the country. When we supported the president, people said we were a rubber-stamp; when we opposed the president, we were disloyal and obstructionist.

You can never please everyone when you are working in Congress, no matter how many hours you put in, no matter how skillful you are. You all know too well what I'm talking about as staff directors when I talk about the frustrations, among them:

- committee meetings go on without end;
- the work is tedious, requiring that you go over legislation comma by comma;
- you are constantly running from one meeting or appointment to another
- your daily schedule is always being interrupted, revised, or simply scrapped.
- if you have a family, you're going to miss many important family events;
- and you cannot plan ahead, whether for an evening off or for a vacation, because some event or emergency always demands that Congress stay in session longer than planned.

All the political posturing, sniping and scrambles to claim credit for good things—or avoid blame for bad—sometimes becomes disheartening, as does the constant maneuvering for partisan advantage. And for put-

ting up with all of this, you get paid less than you could make in the private sector, while facing harsh and frequent criticism.

Yet, despite it all, most members run for reelection and remain in Congress as long as they can. Most of you worked long and hard to become a committee staff director.

Is it all worthwhile? Yes, of course it is. Why? Let's be frank—some of it satisfies the ego. Some like the power and the trappings of power—when you speak, people listen, and that is very satisfying; but most of you, I think, are truly motivated by the belief that, as hard as it is, you can make a difference and enhance the lives of ordinary Americans.

Then, too, it is all pretty exciting—and interesting. The sheer challenge of public policy issues attracts us. There is a pervasive sense on Capitol Hill that it is where the issues of greatest importance to the nation are being sorted out. This is where the action is. Sometimes this is misplaced, but often it is not.

You struggle over the issues that aroused the passions of this country's founding generation. How much power should the federal government be given? How should powers be separated among the branches? How do we resolve the tension between encouraging individual liberty and security? What role should our country play in the world?

These great issues are subject to debate every time a new federal budget comes to a vote, or a major presidential initiative gets introduced on Capitol Hill. When you start working in Congress, you get a chance to take part in this ongoing debate—our great experiment with democracy.

Your public service gives you a stimulating, proud and lively career. So I salute each of you for the vital role that you play within this institution, and in your service to your fellow Americans. You are contributing to the success and direction of this country. I hope you feel that by working in the Congress you are given the unique opportunity to make a difference in the lives of people and the great affairs of this nation. I would wager that no matter where your career takes you from Capitol Hill, you will look back on your public service as the most rewarding of your career.

The work is hard, the recognition rare, the monetary reward modest; but your reward is a deeply fulfilling life in public service and a key role in American democracy. What more could you want?

HONORING SIX BRAVE BRENTWOOD POLICE OFFICERS AS TOP COPS

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 7, 2003

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate six courageous police officers from the Brentwood, Tennessee, Police Department for receiving this year's National Association of Police Organization's TOP COPS Award. The six police officers are Stephanie Bellis Warner, Tommy Walsh, Jim Campbell, Tommy Campsey, Richard Hickey and Steve Walling.

On May 6, 2003, their heroic and selfless actions prevented a number of innocent bystanders from getting hurt during the pursuit of a bank robbery suspect. Officer Warner caught up with the suspect at a busy intersection and was engaged in a brief gun battle. She was wounded during the exchange, as

was Sergeant Tommy Walsh, who arrived at the scene soon after Warner. Despite their injuries, the two continued to coordinate the suspect's apprehension.

Officers Jim Campbell, Tommy Campsey, Richard Hickey and Steve Walling arrived on the scene to find the suspect standing over the wounded Walsh with an assault rifle. The four officers, however, quickly ended the suspect's attempt to continue his shooting spree. For their heroism and sacrifice, all six officers are being honored during the association's 10th annual TOP COPS Awards ceremony this weekend in Washington, DC.

As this terrible incident demonstrates, police officers put their lives on the line every day to help and protect each one of us. I want to personally thank officers Warner, Walsh, Campbell, Campsey, Hickey and Walling for their contributions to society, not only on the day they stopped a violent bank robber, but also on each and every day they put on their badges and patrol our streets. This award is well-deserved.

**BLACK/JEWISH FORUM OF
BALTIMORE, INC.**

HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 7, 2003

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend and congratulate the Black/Jewish Forum of Baltimore, Inc. (BLEWS) upon their 25th anniversary, an event that is being celebrated at BLEWS annual dinner meeting on November 19, 2003.

Since its inception, BLEWS has acted to further understanding and cooperation between the African-American and Jewish communities in the Baltimore Metropolitan Area. Through a variety of programs and through dialogue, BLEWS has worked to overcome intolerance, discrimination, hate crimes and stereotypes. BLEWS has participated in the U.S. Attorney's Hate Crimes Task Force, assisted in defusing intergroup tensions at universities and helped community groups deal with hate crimes and diversity issues.

For the past 5 years, BLEWS has focused on its Youth Initiative with funding from several foundations. The Youth Initiative has conducted intensive all-day workshops for African-American and Jewish high school students to expose them to each other's history and culture, to dispel stereotypes and to encourage attitudes of tolerance, understanding and cooperation. These youth also have been taken to museums, plays, films and other activities that encourage friendship, greater understanding and community service.

Every spring, the high school students participate in a Jewish Passover/African-American Overcome Seder meal that celebrates the theme of freedom. Because of their outstanding work in intergroup relations, BLEWS was recognized by President Clinton as one of the "President's Promising Practices In Race Relations."

I hope my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives will join me in saluting BLEWS, a model youth organization that is worth replicating elsewhere in the United States.

NEWSPAPERS CALL FOR AN INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION OF THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 7, 2003

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call my colleagues' attention to two newspaper editorials concerning the leak of a covert CIA agent's identity. These editorials, printed last Thursday in the Contra Costa Times, of Walnut Creek California, and the San Francisco Chronicle, address the very serious federal crime involving the leak of the name and occupation of a covert CIA agent who is the wife of a former U.S. ambassador who investigated and then revealed that the Administration had used false information to justify the war against Iraq. Both newspapers call for a special counsel to investigate the White House's role in this leak, and the Chronicle suggests that Congress might need to conduct its own inquiry. The Washington Post and ABC News recently conducted a poll that found that seven out of ten Americans support a special counsel to investigate this serious matter.

I support many of my colleagues in the House and Senate who have called for a special counsel for similar reasons as stated by these newspapers. It is not credible that the United States Attorney General, John Ashcroft, can independently investigate a potential crime by this White House when not only was he appointed by President Bush but he employed the president's top political adviser on numerous occasions to help him in his Senate election campaign. The credibility of this Administration is already low, when you consider their failure to revive the economy, the clearly misleading nature of the evidence they provided to justify a war in Iraq, and their failure to properly prepare for the post-war conflict. The Administration owes it to the public to ensure that the most independent investigation possible is carried out regarding the leak of the CIA agent's identity.

The articles appear as follows:

[From the Contra Costa Times, Oct. 2, 2003]

INDEPENDENT PROBE

If President Bush wants to find out who leaked information about a CIA officer to journalists he should support an investigation by an independent special council, not just one by the Justice Department. The leak is a serious matter involving the wife of a diplomat who was critical of Bush's assessment of Iraq's attempt to get uranium from Africa.

Joseph Wilson IV, in a July 6 op-ed piece in The New York Times, recounted his mission on behalf of the CIA in early 2002. He was investigating the possibility that Saddam Hussein was attempting to obtain uranium for Iraq's nuclear arms program. Wilson charged that the Bush administration twisted some of the information to make a case for going to war against Iraq.

Eight days after the commentary appeared, Robert Novak wrote a column that revealed Wilson's wife, Valerie Plame, as a CIA official. Novak attributed his information about Plame to two "senior administration officials." Two other journalists from Newsday, Timothy Phelps and Knut Royce, expanded on Novak's column after confirming Novak's account.

Novak refuses to reveal his confidential sources. That is his right and obligation as a journalist. But we are suspicious of the motivation of Novak and those who leaked the information about Plame. It appears to be retaliation against Wilson and a warning to others.

The leak and almost gratuitous mention of Plame in the column put her and anyone she did business with in jeopardy. We wonder what Novak would have written in his column had some liberal columnist revealed the name of an undercover CIA officer.

The damage caused by the leak goes beyond the CIA and into the White House. Certainly Bush would like to unveil the leakers, and we trust that the Justice Department has competent investigators. However, it is important to avoid a conflict of interest, which would occur if the probe is handled by Justice, led by political appointee John Ashcroft.

The surest way to both nab the leakers and assure public confidence is through a special counsel. To do otherwise damages the credibility of the White House and leaves the door open for political demagoguery by the president's opponents.

[From the San Francisco Chronicle, Oct. 2, 2003]

A DANGEROUS LEAK

The Still Unfolding story that White House officials leaked sensitive information to silence a critic of the Iraq War is a troubling addendum to what so far has been the curious, if not exaggerated, reasoning behind the Persian Gulf foray in the first place.

This week the FBI launched a full-scale criminal probe to determine who disclosed the identity of an undercover CIA operative and whether federal law had been broken. A senior administration official has confirmed that two top White House staffers outed the agent to punish her husband, former Ambassador Joseph Wilson, who forced Bush to back track on his State of Union assertion that Iraq may be building a nuclear arsenal with uranium from Africa. Two years earlier, Wilson investigated and found no such Iraq-Africa link, and pilloried Bush in a newspaper op-ed for implying that there was.

As revenge, someone at the White House leaked to the press the name and occupation of Wilson's wife, an undercover weapons expert. Aside from threatening her life, it further inhibits the effectiveness of the nation's intelligence operations.

Bush disavowed any knowledge of the treacherous deed, but failed to show the kind of outrage this warranted. Either a special counsel should look into this matter, or Congress should conduct its own inquiry.

**HONORING ESTHER SHIPP ON HER
90TH BIRTHDAY**

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 7, 2003

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Esther Shipp on her 90th Birthday. Born September 7, 1913, Esther has been a resident of Boulder City since 1941. I am pleased to join Esther's friends, her five generations of relatives, and all of Boulder City in congratulating her on reaching this milestone.